

NOTES ON THE AVIFAUNAS OF THE KAKAMEGA AND THE NANDI FORESTS Diamond & Fayad (1979) made comparisons between the avifaunas of the Kakamega and North Nandi Forests which, in some cases, are at variance with my own observations (Mann in prep. (a)) based on netting operations in the Kakamega and South Nandi Forests, and on walking expeditions in the Kakamega, South Nandi and North Nandi Forests, between 1970 and 1975. Most of the netting was done in a part of the Kakamega Forest on the property of the Kaimosi Agricultural Training Centre. This locality, which is in the extreme western part of the forest, will be referred to as 'the study area'.

*Terpsiphone viridis* Paradise Flycatcher

I have recorded this in small patches of relict forest surrounded by *shambas* in a number of areas of the North Nandi from Kapsabet to Gurgung, but it was not recorded in deep forest.

*Trochocercus albonotatus* White-tailed Crested Flycatcher

I recorded this species in the Kakamega Forest only in my study area, at about 1650 m, which may be its lower altitudinal limit in Kenya. It has also been collected in the Kakamega Forest by A.D. Forbes-Watson (Ripley & Bond 1971). In my study area only two were caught, compared with ten *T. nigromitratus*.

*Trochocercus nigromitratus* Dusky Crested Flycatcher

This species must reach its upper altitudinal limit in western Kenya at about 1650 m as I did not record it in either of the Nandi Forests.

*Trichastoma* spp.

I have not recorded either *Trichastoma fulvescens*, the Brown Illadopsis or *T. rufipennis*, the Pale-breasted Illadopsis in the Nandi Forests, suggesting that the upper altitudinal limit in western Kenya is similar to that of *Trochocercus nigromitratus*. *T. fulvescens* was the least numerous of the four species of *Trichastoma* in my study area.

*Kakamega poliothorax* Grey-chested Illadopsis

Further investigations into the systematic position of this species (Mann, Burton & Lennensteadt 1978, Mann 1979 and in prep. (b)) suggest that this species is not at all close to *Trichastoma*, possibly not even a babbler, in which case its English name is misleading.

This species was not uncommon in my study area (16 being trapped in two years) and is very faithful to its territory, individuals being more likely to be re-trapped than any species of bird in the study area. Although difficult to see, it has a distinctive call, so netting is not essential to establish its presence. It is most likely to be found near streams. Diamond & Fayad consider this species to be more common in the North Nandi than in the Kakamega Forest. I suggest that it is very local in the North Nandi Forest, as I have never recorded it there. It is also very local in the Kakamega and South Nandi Forests, but because a few may be trapped together, and possibly re-trapped subsequently, a false impression of abundance may be formed.

*Alcippe abyssinica* African Hill Babbler

Diamond & Fayad believed this species to be absent from the Kakamega Forest. However, I have recorded this species once in the Kakamega Forest, by the River Ikuywa. A.D. Forbes-Watson has also recorded it in this forest (Ripley & Bond 1971). Since it is readily netted, and has a conspicuous song, it is unlikely to be overlooked. It is common in the Nandi Forests, and appears to reach its lower altitudinal limit in western Kenya at about 1540 m.

*Sylvietta leucophrys* White-browed Crombec

Diamond & Fayad state that this species does not occur in the Kakamega Forest. My only records there are from my study area. A.D. Forbes-Watson also recorded it in the forest. Its lower altitudinal limit is probably similar to *Alcippe*'s.

*Andropadus virens* Little Greenbul

Although common in the Kakamega Forest, it was not recorded in the North Nandi, and only at 1700 m in the South Nandi. This must be its upper limit in western Kenya.

*Andropadus ansorgei* Ansorge's Greenbul, *A. gracilis* Little Grey Greenbul and *Phyllastrephus baumanni* Toro Olive Greenbul

I agree with Diamond & Fayad that these are rare in the Kakamega Forest, and in the case of the first two, probably forage too high to be netted frequently. They would be very difficult to identify unless trapped.

*Chlorocichla laetissima* Joyful Greenbul

I have recorded this species in the South Nandi, and once in Taressia Forest (a small disjunct of the North Nandi at 2100 m). It occurs at similar altitudes in Kabartonjo Forest, Tugen Hills. Unlike many forest greenbuls, this species is not averse to crossing open areas, and the Taressia birds could have been wanderers. It is common in the Kakamega Forest. It was not recorded in the North Nandi by Diamond & Fayad.

*Platysteira* spp.

Diamond & Fayad state that all four Kakamega species are likely to be trapped there. In my experience only *blissetti*, Jameson's Wattle-eye, is common and widespread. It also occurs at 1700 m in the South Nandi. *P. cyanea*, Wattle-eye, and *castanea*, Chestnut Wattle-eye, are patchily distributed. *P. cyanea* occurs in the South and North Nandi Forests, but is distinctly uncommon.

*P. castanea* also occurs at 1700 m in the South Nandi Forest. I only found *P. concreta*, the Yellow-bellied Wattle-eye, on a handful of occasions in the Kakamega Forest and never caught it. A definite change in status must have occurred if it is as common as implied by Diamond & Fayad. D. Sturber told me that he had once seen the species in the South Nandi Forest near Kaimosi.

Although much commoner in the Nandi Forests, *peltata*, the Black-throated Wattle-eye, does occur in a number of localities in the Kakamega Forest, often drawing attention to itself by its song, and A.D. Forbes-Watson also recorded it there (Ripley & Bond 1971). Diamond & Fayad state that it does not occur there.

*Cryptospiza salvadorii* Abyssinian Crimson-wing, *Turdus piaggiae* Abyssinian Ground Thrush and *Bradypterus cinnamomeus* Cinnamon Bracken Warbler

Diamond & Fayad do not record these species from the North Nandi or the Kakamega Forests and I have no records. However, I have recorded all three, the first commonly, in the South Nandi down to about 2000 m.

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#### LESLIE HILTON BROWN - AN APPRECIATION

Irascible, uncompromising and totally individual, he gave, and left, far more than he demanded from life; correction - he demanded a lot, and usually got it, but never for himself; thus his contribution to the world was monumental.

Agriculture and ecology, the environment in which we live, and his great love, the world of birds, all benefited vastly from his dedicated work. There can be few men who have contributed so much, and to those of us who were lucky enough to be counted as his friends, he gave even more - an insight into the world of a dying race. As a colonial administrator in his chosen field he can have had few equals, yet his total intolerance of any form of inefficiency or idleness (human failings of which he was violently critical) was always tempered with a determination to earn his keep, and he could always come up with a practical, viable answer, which he was able and willing to demonstrate himself.

The subject of soil erosion (currently popular again) with all its cumulative disasters, had been controlled almost completely by his own personal efforts as long ago as 1960. Many are the old Mberere people in the lower Embu District who remember "Brown". They never knew when he would turn up personally, on foot, to inspect their *shambas*, and consequently few were eroded! One of his many stories - round a camp fire on Eagle Hill - with a glass of whisky in hand, told of an old man who harvested *miraa* for a living. In the colonial days this was highly illegal - and the old man was horrified and shattered at the appearance of "Brown" in his boma, on the top of a mountain in the Mberere area, just as he had cut a large quantity for illicit sale. We were never told what happened to the old man in the matter of the illegal *miraa*, except that his eroded *shamba* was beautifully terraced within a week!

Another incident I witnessed myself took place during one of the frequent visits to Eagle Hill between 1977 and 1979. We watched with horror and disgust the progression of a large gully as it eroded its way further and further, with each rainstorm, up the mountainside, taking huge trees and tons of viable soil with it - each visit showing more and more just how unthinking neglect could rapidly destroy the land. It started just above a school full of eager young children and dedicated teachers (we stopped once or twice and spoke to them in class). We left the school one day in time to record another hundred yards or so of gully, now ten feet deep, with a fallen 20 year-old acacia tree in its maw, just as the school children started singing a hymn. Brown stopped in his stride, listened a moment, and growled "A little more real education and a lot less of God and Shakespeare could stop this rot in five minutes".

There was humour too, closely related to his links with nature and human environment. Breakfasting one morning at the Isaac Walton Inn at Embu, raucous 'pop' music, loud and pounding, boomed from the speakers in the dining room. With a cold aggressive look at the source he commented in a low growl "By God,